

# Essay on My First Day at College

I remember my first day at college. I had looked forward to it from my school days. Life at college meant for me the joy of a free and fuller life. It meant that I was no longer a boy that I had grown up and had become fit to bear larger responsibilities. Naturally, the first day of college was the beginning of a new chapter in my life.

First I tasted freedom when I saw that I would no longer be confined to the same room for hours together as I used to be at school. I had to move from room to room at the end of each lecture. From the lecture hall to the library, from seminar to the laboratory, from the common room to the gymnasium, a college student is constantly on the move. To me on the first day that in itself was thrilling to experience. Imagine a hundred of us rushing down the corridors, or across fields to the next class to occupy the best or the most comfortable seat. It was a sensation of new life, a feeling of exciting youthful vitality. Of course, there were some among us who took it gravely and philosophically and went from class to class at a sedate and sober pace indifferent whether they occupied a seat on the first bench or on the last. But I was not one of these. It was a privilege to be able to choose my own seat, to have struggled for it, and to get it by my own effort. It gave me a sense of personality; I tasted life, as it were with a deep relish.

Then I found that here at college I would not be kept at my books all the four or five hours of my stay. Sometimes between classes, there would be a break; an off-period or two which I could spend relaxing. My college had a good reading-room attached to the library, and a common room which was even better furnished with means for healthy indoor recreations, carom and Ping-Pong sets; newspapers and periodicals: benches on which we could lounge and space to loiter in. On that first day, I was, of course, a mere looker-on; the seniors

were there, reading newspapers, playing games, or discussing things. How important and grown-up they looked. Soon I also would be one of them. In that common room for students, I looked forward to having many hours of joy. I also walked to the library and the corridors and realized with pride that I was a member of a richer and fuller corporate life.

No less thrilling to me were the classes. The roll call, the lectures delivered on the various subjects, the peculiarities of the different teacher, – the learning one, the elocution of another, the strict discipline enforced by a third – all these provided me and my friends with subjects for endless gossip and interminable discussion. Already even on that first day, I felt myself developing a sense of college loyalty and I would have stood up my college against the whole world.

The first day was generally a day of exploration. I peeped in at the principal's room and the professor's rooms, and the offices and the laboratories and the library. I looked into offices of the union – our college union. It was the symbol of our academic freedom. And there was the room of the secretary of college sports. I would soon be sharing in these amenities of college life. But I thought at the same time that with greater liberty I would have to assume target responsibilities. And this was further brought home to me by many of my teachers. So before the day was over I had realized that from now on I was free to drop a class and to waste a period in the common room. There would be no one to ask me why I did not prepare my lessons; few to take me to task if I came to a class unprepared: none to punish me if my mind played truant while work was going on in the class. But I could do it only at my own cost, and in the end, I would have to thank only myself for my negligence and inattention. I also found that to the earnest student the college offered help and guidance in many ways. Here we would have to discover our own needs and seek out ways of helping ourselves. In other words, there would

be no spoon-feeding. I found liberty, but with it there were responsibilities. I came back feeling happy, but conscious of a new burden laid on me.